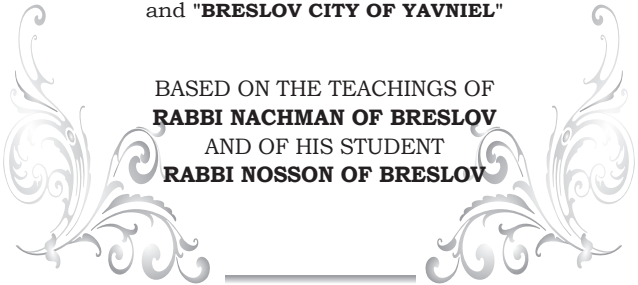




# A Soft Answer

**Explaining the Greatness of Patience**  
And the Importance of Avoiding Anger,  
In Both One's Spiritual and Worldly  
Experiences, And in This Way, Attaining  
a Truly Good Life

Written by the holy tzaddik  
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**"HEICHEL HAKODESH BRESLOV"**  
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BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF  
**RABBI NACHMAN OF BRESLOV**  
AND OF HIS STUDENT  
**RABBI NOSSON OF BRESLOV**

הכתובת להשיג את הספר הקדוש הזה וכל ספרי  
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# A Soft Answer

## 1.

My dear fellow-Jew, know that this life is filled with great trials. Everyone must undergo upsets, falls, sufferings and bouts of bitterness. Everyone must experience constant changes in his mood and disturbances of equilibrium. Every day and every hour, it is possible for a person's state of mind to shift so radically that the event of an instant can break his spirit and completely discourage him.

My dear fellow-Jew, no adequate response to such events exists, save that

of patience. You must make yourself a master of patience, for the ability to bear all that one goes through is the most precious of traits. A person undergoes such great pressures, problems and bitternesses every day that he could almost come to do away with himself — if it weren't for the trait of patience, which allows him to bear everything which he must pass through.

Therefore, my dear fellow-Jew, although you may suffer upsets, pressures and disappointments, see that you do not fall prey to nervousness. Be exceedingly patient. In reply to all that which you undergo, be silent — both in your speech and in your heart.

Then you will be able to pass through this world in peace. You will always succeed, for a person's success in this life depends on his attainment of that most valuable of qualities: patience — patience in the face of everything.

How can you attain true patience —

the bearing with equanimity of all your experiences, both the spiritual and the worldly? The answer is: faith.



You must fill your consciousness with the truth of G-d's being. You must attain a wondrous awareness that there is no existence independent of G-d, and that everything is in its essence complete Divinity. "No man can stub his finger below unless it is decreed from above" (Chulin 7a); "No one can take what is meant for another, and no kingdom touch upon a neighboring kingdom by as little as a hairsbreadth" (Yoma 38a). Indeed, nothing occurs of itself: "even a menial water-carrier is appointed to his post by heaven" (Ber. 58a).

When you gain the awareness that everything is from G-d, this itself will fill

you with great forbearance. There is no palliative which calms a person's nerves like faith. Faith in G-d is the essence of life and of length of days. When a person believes in G-d with a simple faith, he clings to G-d entirely. When you believe that there is no existence independent of G-d, in that alone you truly cling to Him.



My dear fellow-Jew, there is only one way to achieve a completely clear and pure faith in G-d and His supervision of every detail of existence. That way is prayer.

You must accustom yourself to pray the fixed daily prayers: shacharit in the morning, minchah in the afternoon, maariv in the evening and chatzot at midnight. You must pay attention to the simple meaning of what you are saying, listening to yourself

and concentrating on your words. This itself will open up your consciousness so that you will be able to feel G-d's great presence and how that He invigorates, sustains and maintains all of creation.

You will achieve faith. Faith stems from prayer, because when a person prays to G-d, he shows that he believes in G-d. Similarly, when a person believes in G-d, he comes to pray to Him.

The true perfection of prayer, which is a person's expression of the faith deep within his heart, is reached particularly via hitbodedut. Hitbodedut is a person's personal prayer — his own words spoken in his own daily language.

Therefore, find a spot where you can be alone and there begin to speak to G-d in your own words. Tell him everything which is in your heart and all which oppresses you. Hold back nothing, but speak openly with complete simplicity and lack of sophistication.

This will open the gates of your mind and consciousness. You will begin to feel the presence of G-d glowing upon you. As you proceed regularly in

this practice, your consciousness will be strengthened, and your mind clarified and purified. Then the regular, fixed prayers — shacharit, minchah, maariv and chatzot — too will be illumined for you.

Until now, you may not have gained access to the revelation of Divinity achieved by prayer because your consciousness was blocked up.

When you will accustom yourself to speak to G-d in your own words, telling Him everything in your heart in a free and extemporaneous manner, your faith will become clear and purified, and it will illumine you.

Then you will attain the precious trait of patience, and you will bear with equanimity all of your experiences.



## 4.

My dear fellow-Jew, do not regard lightly the urging of these words. Your life — in both its spiritual and worldly aspects — depends on them.

At a time that you undergo troubles and upsets, sufferings, strictures and misadventures, you are in great danger of falling to a deep dejection and depression, the consequences of which may be thoughts of doing away with yourself, G-d forbid.

Even if you do not come to this point, you may begin to cast aside your Judaism and spiritual life. As a result of the great nervousness and bitterness which begin to grip you, you may grow lax in performing the commandments of our Torah and in praying until, G-d forbid, you might reach

complete denial of G-d. At that point you would have in one blow lost both this world and the world-to-come. Without a simple faith in G-d, a person is completely lost, for he has no one to whom to turn in his hour of distress, and his life is bleak and bitter. However, when you believe in G-d, then G-d is with you always. You can always flee to G-d and tell Him all that is in your heart and everything which is occurring to you. This will cool off the nervousness, anger and bitterness which attempt to erupt in you at every untoward incident.



My dear fellow-Jew, whatever you may be faced with, make a firm stand. Let nothing break you. Accustom yourself to be patient, and do not engage in any fights with those who cause you sorrow.

Believe in G-d with a simple faith: that He rules the universe; that everything is from Him; and that even those who trouble and humiliate you are from Him — they are merely His agents. Therefore, why

should these people who harass you lead you to sadness and anger? Rather, run to G-d — speak with Him and pray to Him. This will fill you with faith, and faith will bring you to great patience regarding each facet of your life.



My dear fellow-Jew, know that a person who is always nervous is always angry. And when a person is temperamentally angry, he isn't settled at all. He is always at odds with himself, or with his wife and children, or with his neighbors and friends. His life is terribly bitter, and out of anguish he may

come to wish for death.

Such a person has created his own hell, because he lacks patience. If he were to bear matters patiently even a little bit, his entire situation would improve, and he would feel much better.

As a general rule, a nervous person is like an explosive: just one match can cause the whole thing to blow up and completely destroy itself. When a person is nervous, if someone does the smallest thing to him — or if he simply imagines that someone started up with him — he becomes depressed and extremely angry, and he gets on bad terms with everyone: with himself, with his wife and children, and with his neighbors and friends.

If you have this type of character, do not simply accept such a situation. Accustom yourself to the precious trait of patience. Bear everything calmly. In the face of those who trouble and insult you, be always silent.

Ultimately, everything will change to good. Indeed, you will grow to be much liked by others, and people will come to you to help you in all your affairs. It is human nature to like a patient person. This is because a patient person is always imbued with joy; he is always filled with goodness, and ready to help others.

Therefore, my fellow-Jew, hold tightly to this precious trait of patience, for it is the foundation of a person's existence, both in this world and in the world-to-come.



My dear fellow-Jew, bear patiently all that you undergo. Do not so much as gaze upon anyone who causes you troubles, and do not indulge in any self-pity whatsoever.

Everything which is occurring is for your eternal good. Corresponding to all the

sorrow, anxiety and anguish that a person suffers in this world, so is a great portion of his sins forgiven him and wiped away.

Were you to be aware of the great benefit accruing to you from all your troubles, humiliations and psychological batterings, you wouldn't be full of grief at all. To the contrary, you would rejoice in your pleasant lot.

A person's trial is that he is unaware of this. Therefore, when he undergoes an onslaught of insults and sufferings, it is difficult for him to strengthen himself. Instead, he falls into depression and dreariness. He loses all patience to bear his situation, and he becomes extremely angry. At that moment, such a person loses everything.

Therefore, my dear fellow-Jew, do not allow a bad situation to continue. Strengthen yourself very much. Engage in many acts which will put you in a joyful, relaxed mood, and react with great

patience to all which you undergo.



My dear fellow-Jew, bear with equanimity all of your experiences. It may well be that according to the number of your wrong acts and sins; you should be undergoing much more painful occurrences than you actually are. However, G-d is full of compassion, and exacts the price of your sins in your weariness and mental suffering.

Therefore, patiently accept all that you undergo. Be very forbearing, and do not let anything cause you to lose yourself possession. Hold fast to calmness, and always say to you, "Every bit of unhappiness, anxiety, anguish and humiliation which I experience is an atonement for my wrong acts."

My dear fellow-Jew, at the moment you

say these words, you cause delights in the upper worlds the like of which is beyond your ability to comprehend.

The sufferings which a person undergoes have been carefully meted out as an antidote for his sins. G-d is compassionate and His one wish is to help a person in both this and the future world.

When a person accepts his sufferings with love and a broad heart, his sins are erased. He is forgiven, and he attains the goodness hidden in the world. However, when a person rebels and kicks against his problems, they are multiplied to the point that he may feel that his nerves are ready to explode.



My dear fellow-Jew, patience is the most valuable of qualities. It is the most



essential ingredient to a person's success in both this and the future world. The only means of attaining this trait is strong faith.

You must fill yourself with a constant faith and awareness that there is none else than G-d. He fills and surrounds all worlds, and there is no existence independent of Him.

Once you reach this awareness, you will open your mouth and speak to Him at length in your own words.

This speech and prayer to G-d will fill you with true hope and extraordinary patience. Ultimately, you will display patience visavis every aspect and detail of your life, and you will never lose your temper at all.



My dear fellow-Jew, every day has its own challenges. Every day, then, you

are liable to become nervous, since you are encountering a new, previously-unexperienced problem.

Your service in this world is to strive to attain the ability of letting nothing disturb the calm process of your thoughts, so that nothing makes you nervous, nothing makes you angry, and nothing discourages you.

This you will attain only with faith — you must fill yourself with the awareness that G-d vivifies, maintains and sustains all of creation.

The more you assimilate this consciousness, the more will you speak to G-d freely, in your own words.

Then you will be able to bear patiently all of your experiences. You will succeed in all your ways. Every day will be fresh and new, and no incident will overwhelm you.

## 11.

My dear fellow-Jaw, why should you get upset and confused by every word and comment someone else might make? Why don't you rather run to G-d?

Accustom- yourself to speak to G-d in your own words. Tell Him all of your pains, your hurts and frustrations. Your nerves will calm down, and cheer will enter your bones. You will certainly lift yourself above the threat of actual depression.

The very act of speaking out your woes to G-d will itself suck the poison of bitterness from your heart.

Generally, when a person is depressed, upset or nervous, and has no one to speak to, he is susceptible to losing control of himself.

Even if he does find a sympathetic ear, who knows if that person will really

understand him? And if that person does, in fact, understand, who says that he can actually help?

But when you make a regular practice of speaking to G-d, you will always be calm and tranquil. G-d is always to be found, for His presence inhabits all space and time. Therefore, you can always approach Him — you merely have to call to Him.

G-d can certainly help you. G-d certainly understands you.

Make it a regular habit, therefore, to speak to G-d in your own words. You will feel yourself becoming a calm and patient person, and you will leave behind your nervousness forever.



My dear fellow-Jew, do not deceive

yourself into believing that you can quickly and easily achieve a patient spirit. Patience is attained through faith, which is itself apprehended by much prayer.

This is not an easy process. Not at all! It takes toil and striving over a period of months and years. As you work and struggle, you will be tested to see if you are really serious in your desire to improve yourself and to return to G-d.

You must become truly strong, and bear unflinchingly the untoward experiences in both the worldly and spiritual elements of your life. You must reach the point where unpleasant experiences do not daunt you, nor do people frighten you. You must come to a level where you speak to G-d daily in your own words (this is called *hitbodedut*).

Then your faith in G-d will come to maturity. At that point, you will enter the realm of holiness. But this state can be reached only after years of effort.

Do not be lazy. Do not let the daily

occurrences of your life weaken you. Do not let your heart sink when, despite your work and sincere effort, you see no change in yourself but experience the same nervousness, depression and unhappiness as before. It may appear that you didn't accomplish anything, and that nothing helps — but don't say that at all!

All of this is a test. Your free will and choice are being tried. Are you really capable of attaining patience and letting no incident — secular or spiritual — upset you? When you leap these hurdles set in your path by providence, you will taste of true patience; and, while still in this world, you will experience the pleasure of the world-to-come.



My dear fellow-Jew, allow nothing to

unseat you from your self-possession. Let no incident frighten or disturb you.

At the instigation of any worrying event, run quickly to G-d. Tell Him all that is in your heart and all which you are undergoing, enumerating the details of your experiences.

This will truly save you. As Rabbi Nachman of Breslov said, the only true advice which one can give to another is that he runs to G-d.

Any advice which is not tied to the idea of prayer is no advice at all. Such "advice" will bring you an excess of light which, flowing into the vessels of your being like a mighty flood, will shatter and even obliterate those vessels.

Rather, accustom yourself to discuss matters with G-d, going over every detail which concerns you, and considering which advice will best further your progress. Then you will build within yourself strong spiritual vessels with which to adequately

accept advice in the proper measure and quantity.

You will attain that precious quality, patience, and you will bear calmly and serenely the kaleidoscope of events which flash about you.

Your life will be truly sweet and satisfied, because there is no greater sweetness and pleasantness than that which is enjoyed by the person who has attained patience and who, in the face of all which he undergoes, is quiet and self-collected.



A person who is always unhappy is liable to be nervous as well.

An unhappy, bleak mood constricts a person's mind and leads to nervousness. Most jittery people are so unsatisfied,



downhearted people.

Therefore, you should do all sorts of things to lake yourself joyful. Then your consciousness will expand, and you will meet all situations with uncommon calm.

Joy leads to calm because joy expands a person's mind and heart so that he may attain spiritual insights into G-d's Divinity.

Why indulge in depression and black moods? Why invest worry in a world which is not yours? Whether you are unhappy or joyful, nervous or calm, the day will pass at the same 24-hour rate. Better, then to spend those precious hours in joy and patience.

Remind yourself of this daily. Then your entire life will pass in calm and composure.



My dear fellow-Jew, find all sorts of

ways to cheer yourself. Always be aware of the truth of G-d's existence. Know that everything is in its essence complete Divinity, and that G-d supervises every facet of creation. In light of that, why should every passing incident crush you?

It is better that you bear everything calmly. This will as well destroy the evil and falsehood which have clung to you as a result of your sins and wrong-doings. Sins and wrong-doings are the primary cause of a person's adapting a mind-set of -nervousness and dark depression. This is because when a person acts wrongly, G-d's light is hidden from him. As a result, he suffers unhappiness and bitterness, punishment and stern justice.

Accustom yourself to accept all such experiences with patience and silence. No matter how bitter, no matter how seemingly cruel, bear everything in silence.

My dear fellow-Jew, this brave silence will cast off the veils and curtains which

had been folded about your soul and had hidden from you supernal secrets which are beyond the grasp of rational comprehension.

Only be extremely patient, my dear fellow-Jew, and always turn to G-d to speak to Him in your own words.

Then you will be purified, inside and out, and become a vessel in which G-d's presence may rest.



My dear fellow-Jew, if you wish to lead a pleasant and blessed life in this world, accustom yourself to bear patiently all that you undergo.

You can accomplish this if you hold fast to joy and gladness. Always make yourself joyous. Your consciousness will be expanded so that you will be able to believe

in G-d. You will understand and recognize that everything is in its essence utter Divinity, and that G-d rules the universe with love and compassion.

Accustom yourself to thank and praise G-d always for all the mercy and love which He has bestowed on you, which He is presently giving you, and which He will continue to send you in future days.

Then your passage through this world will be one whose hallmark is peace.

*Rabbi Nachman instructed everyone to say these ten psalms, as a wonderful remedy (tikun) for all sorts of problems.*

*16 - 32 - 41 - 42 - 59 - 77*

*90 - 105 - 137 - 150*

*It is a custom to recite them every day.*

## **A Wondrous Essay**

### **From the Holy and Awesome Book Likutei Moharan**

**By Rabbi Nachman of Breslov**

When a person enters into the service of G-d, he is as a general rule, confronted with being distanced from G-d. It suddenly appears to him that Heaven is pushing him aside so as not to allow him to begin serving G-d at all. The truth of the matter however is, that the purpose of all this distancing is actually to ultimately bring him closer to G-d.

A person needs a very great amount of strength so as not to get discouraged, G-d forbid, when he sees that despite the passage of the many days and years, during which he has striven so greatly to serve G-d, he is still very far and hasn't even begun to enter the gates of holiness. He sees that he is still saturated with grossness, corporeality, and is at the mercy of many wrong and confusing

thoughts. He doesn't have the spiritual freedom of movement to carry out holy and G-d directed actions. It appears to him that G-d isn't at all interested in him, and is completely indifferent to his service of Him. He sees that whereas he's constantly crying, entreating, and humbling himself before G-d to help him in his service of Him, he is for all that still very, very far. And so it appears to him that G-d isn't looking towards him, and as if G-d simply doesn't want him at all.

Regarding this, a person needs a great deal of strength to empower himself very much, not to pay heed to these thoughts at all. In truth, all this distancing is actually no other than a way of drawing him close, through testing his sincerely and true yearning for Hashem.

All this occurred to all the spiritual masters, as we have heard from their own lips. It appeared to them that G-d wasn't looking towards them or regarding them at all. They saw that they had been pleading

and striving, working and serving G-d for a long time — yet they were still very, very far. If not for the fact that they had strengthened themselves not to regard this, they wouldn't even have managed to retain their original position, much less merited to achieve their subsequent spiritual successes.

So the principal thing is, my beloved brother, that you be very strong and firm. Gird yourself with all the power in your command to continue serving G-d, and pay no mind at all to any of the occurrences of the type described above.

Should it even be true that you are very far from G-d; should it be true that you are literally every waking hour of the day acting wrongly against Him; still you must know the following. Every movement which such a person steeped in corporeality makes in order to separate himself from that corporeality and to turn to G-d, is very, very great and precious. Even if he has moved no more than a slight degree,

he has actually traversed thousands of miles in the upper worlds.

Regarding this point, a person must rejoice greatly, and he must strengthen himself with continual joy, for depression is very harmful. Indeed, as soon as a person decides to begin serving G-d, it is from that moment and on, a very wrong thing for him to feel depressed. Depression is the “Other Side”, — and G-d despises it.

A person must be extremely stubborn in serving G-d, not abandoning his place, and not retreating from even the little he has accomplished, no matter what may occur to him. Remember this point well. It will be crucial to your success when you begin your service of G-d, no matter how slight the service may be.

A person needs a very, very great stubbornness. He must remain strong and firm, and gird his loins to hold his ground, even if he is constantly being thrown down, G-d forbid. True, sometimes a person is



cast down from serving G-d. Still, he must continue to do his part and carry out whatever service of G-d he can,

not allowing himself to be cast down completely, G-d forbid. It is a law of spiritual progression that a person must undergo these many overthrowings, descents, and confusions before he can enter the gates of holiness. The true spiritual masters also underwent this process.

Another important point: Sometimes a person has already reached the entrance of holiness — and yet he turns back as a result of these confusions. Or when he stands right at the entrance, the “Other Side” and the “Adversary” - rise up very powerfully against him with a terrible vigor and rapaciousness, and don’t allow him to step over the threshold. As a result, he turns back, G-d forbid. This is the way of the “Adversary” and the “Other Side”: When they see that a person is right next to the gates of holiness and about to enter, they spread themselves out against him

with great might. And so a person needs a great amount strength to combat this.

We heard a true spiritual master say, “if at the time I began serving G-d, someone — whoever it might have been — would have told me, ‘My brother, be strong and gird yourself,’ I would have run and leaped forward to an extraordinary degree in serving G-d.” All of the above things we have discussed occurred to him also and he heard words of support from no one.

Therefore, he who wishes to enter into the service of G-d must bear these things in mind.

Strengthen yourself very much and do whatever you can in serving G-d, with the passage of the days and years, you will surely, with G-d’s help, enter the gates of holiness.

Know too that as you move from corporeality to serving G-d, all of the movements and advances you make, no matter how slight they may individually be,

join together, link up and unite, so as to come to your aid at the time of your need.

And know that a person must pass over a very narrow bridge. But the principal and essential thing is: that he has no fear at all.

There is a tree called the “Hundred Year Tree” which grows in the orchards of aristocrats. It is told of this tree that each one of its leaves grows for a hundred years. Of course, in the span of the one hundred years, the leaf undergoes a great deal. But at the end of the hundred years, it is told, the leaf shoots out with a large report like a cannon. For a hundred years, the leaf underwent storms and ‘buffetings’ — still, in the end, it fulfills its task.

Understand this parable well.

It is good that a person follow the path described in Likutei Moharan I 282 — of searching and looking to find in oneself and in others some good merit, some good point. With this bit of good that he finds

in himself and in others, he should make himself joyful and strengthen himself so as not to retreat from his place. Even if a person falls how low it may be, he must nevertheless strengthen himself with this little bit of good which he can still find within himself — until he can merit through this to return to G-d. And then all his premeditated wrong acts will be turned into merits.

This is how the Baal Shem Tov, acted when he was at sea, and the “Adversary” schemed against him. (The Baal Shem Tov yearned deeply to travel to Israel. He was warned from heaven not to go, but he nevertheless set out, paying no mind to any obstacles. As soon as he began travelling, he heard a heavenly proclamation that he had forfeited his place in the World to come, and also lost all of the spiritual levels he had heretofore attained. He responded to that, “If so, I am then like a simple man, and will serve Hashem without the World to come.” And he strengthened

himself very much to continue travelling in complete simplicity. We see then, that when the Baal Shem Tov heard that all of his rewards and attainments were being taken away from him, he found in himself the merit that he is at any rate a simple Jew, and strengthened himself with that.)

You can understand from this to what extent you must go to strengthen yourself never to despair at all, G-d forbid, no matter what may be.

The essential thing is: to be full of joy always. A person must make himself very joyful in whatever way he can — sometimes even through jokes, and clowning; through kidding and fooling around; through jumping and dancing — all just to come to joy. For joy is a very great thing.

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From the standpoint of the greatness and awesome exaltedness of G-d, should a person execute even a small, simple, wrong movement or should he glance at

what he may not look at — it would be fitting that that person be visited with an appropriate punishment, G-d forbid. But G-d is full of compassion, and the entire world is filled with His compassion, as He very much wants that the world continue to exist.

And so a person must strengthen himself very much in serving G-d in whatever way he can, no matter what state he may presently be in. He must rely on G-d's limitless and bountiful compassion. Certainly G-d won't abandon him, no matter what wrong he has done.

The past is gone. The important thing is that from portion in the World-to-come had been returned to him, in the merit that he had not lost himself.

This moment on he will no longer do wrong. Even if he doesn't actively do well, at least when confronted with an opportunity to do wrong, let him not do anything at all— whether in thought or action. Even

the thought of such a person who is still trapped in corporeality is considered an act. That is because our universe, which is referred to as the realm of Action, contains within itself thought. And since thought exists in the realm of Action, therefore it is also considered a type of Action. In such a case, a person must simply sit still and do nothing at all, whether in thought or in action, as said before. As for whatever he may be going through, let him neither regard it nor pay it any mind at all.

Also know that the principle of a complete “return to G-d” is fulfilled under the following circumstances. When a person passes by the exact places and situations he had been in before — each according to what he went through in his former days — but this time he turns his back and subjugates his will so as not to repeat what he had formerly done. This is the essence of a complete “return to G-d.”

It is a very high thing for a person still to have an evil inclination, for then he can serve

G-d precisely with that very inclination. That is, he can take all the enthusiasm and fieriness generated by the evil inclination, and bring it into the service of G-d. That is, he can pray and and entreat G-d with the fieriness brought into his heart by the evil inclination itself. But if a person doesn't have an evil inclination, then his service isn't complete at all.

The essential thing is that, when a person feels the fieriness of the evil inclination move in on him, he stop and blocks it, and then allows it to express itself in prayer and in other service of G-d. At that time, a person should allow his fieriness and enthusiasm to flow, helping him in his service of G-d.

It sometimes happens that although a person isn't leading his life properly, he can pray to G-d with enthusiasm. This too comes from the fieriness of the evil inclination. However, such a person receives no reward for this enthusiasm.





But as for he who wishes to act correctly, it is a great thing that he still has an evil inclination. For then, the “side of evil” is converted to the “side of holiness.” Amen.

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# הספר הקדוש הזה

נדפס לטובת נשמת בעל מחבר  
של הספר הזה מאור עינינו,  
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בן רבי

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נלב"ע י"ז שבט תשע"ה

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.



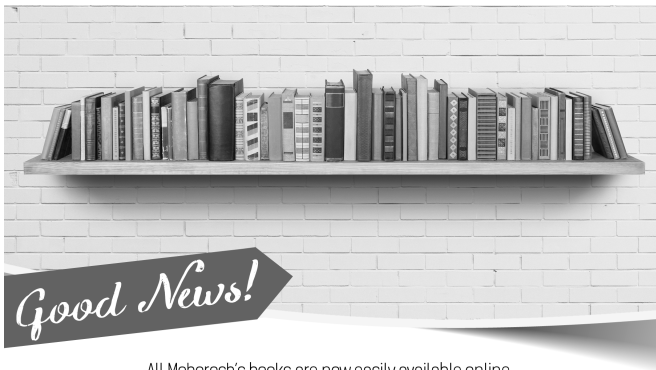
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